

# Guest Editor Kit: Proposing and Organizing a Feature Topic Issue

## ◆ PROPOSING A FEATURE TOPIC

Feature topics (FTs) are special issues of the *Magazine* organized around a timely technical topic of broad interest to the readership. In contrast to stand-alone papers, papers in a FT (typically 3 to 6) are related around a central theme. FTs give papers more prominence and provide a broader perspective on a topic to readers.

Guest Editors interested in organizing an FT are invited to submit a proposal to the Editor-in-Chief (EiC) that describes the significance, timeliness, and scope of the FT.

### **The proposal should address at least:**

- Background and motivation
- Significance and relevance to *IEEE Communications Magazine*
- Scope (typically including a list of specific technical issues)
- Plan for advertising the Call for Papers (CFP) and handling the reviews of submissions
- Short biographies emphasizing the Guest Editors' experience in the topic and relevant editorial experience
- Tentative schedule (from CFP distribution to final manuscripts to ComSoc)
- Draft CFP
- A list of potential authors/reviewers, optional

### **Guest Editors should be aware that:**

- FTs are focused on a topic but the topic should have broad appeal to the *Magazine's* readership.
- Submissions should be collected from open call, not personal invitations (individual authors may be encouraged to write a paper but all submissions go through the same peer review process without assurance of acceptance).
- Advertising a CFP should not rely only on publishing the CFP in the *Magazine* and on the *Magazine* web site. Guest Editors should advertise the CFP through their relevant professional networks.
- Guest Editors should mention how the team members will work together.

A team of Guest Editors representing both academia and industry is an advantage. Roughly, half of the Communication Society members are from industry, and half from academia. The *Magazine* targets both groups simultaneously; thus a team of Guest Editors representing the two groups helps ensure that the feature topic will support the *Magazine's* mission.

- Guest Editors should be aware of the *magazine's* guidelines for style and paper length (see below).

FT proposals will be reviewed by the editorial board. The EiC will notify the Guest Editors with a recommendation that may be rejection, conditional acceptance with recommended changes, or acceptance.

## ◆ ORGANIZING A FEATURE TOPIC

If a FT is accepted, the EiC will schedule the FT for a specific issue and discuss the schedule with the Guest Editors. The Guest Editors should then start to advertise the CFP.

The EiC may assign a technical editor to serve as a liaison to the Guest Editors. The Liaison Editor is to provide help and advice and oversee the progress according to the committed schedule. The Liaison Editor is not intended to duplicate or replace the duties of the Guest Editors. The Liaison Editor does not review papers, but may be requested by the EiC to scan the final accepted papers and their reviews to verify conformance with the *Magazine's* guidelines for format, style, and quality.

If possible, the CFP will be advertised in the *Magazine* but should also be distributed through other avenues according to the FT proposal plan (e.g., mail lists, conference flyers, Web sites, newsletters, Editors' professional networks, etc.). Accounts will be created for Guest Editors in Manuscript Central. All paper submissions should be done online through Manuscript Central following the usual procedures, except papers should be designated for the specific FT using the "Please Select a Topic or Series" drop down menu. When a paper has been properly uploaded, Guest Editors will be automatically notified by Manuscript Central.

[Manuscript Central](#) should be used to assign at least three reviewers to each submission. If a reviewer does not already have an account, Guest Editors can create a new reviewer account.

## ◆ MANUSCRIPT CENTRAL

The general process for Guest Editors using Manuscript Central is:

- Log in with your user id and password at <http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/commag-ieee>. You may update your password and edit your information.
- Click on "Guest Editor Center".

- To see all the manuscripts assigned to you, click on "Original Manuscripts" in the left frame. Or to search, insert information about a specific paper (e.g., author's name) on the right and click "search." Note: your designation will be "Guest Editor" on any paper for which you are the assigned editor.
- Download the articles by clicking on the article title. In the next window, click on the article's title again. The file will be downloaded to your hard drive and opened by the appropriate application.
- Familiarize yourself with the article. Once you decide if an article is to be either rejected without review or submitted to the review process, return to the manuscripts page and click on the "View Details" button for the article you are working on. Find the "Guest Editor Actions" section and do one of the following:
  - If you choose to reject the article without a review, click the "Make Recommendation" button. In the next window, go to the "Post Recommendation" block and click the "Post Recommendation" button. Scroll to the bottom of the page and select the "Rejected" radio button. You may add information to the two comment blocks at the top of the page as you see fit. Click "Send to the Editor-in-Chief" button.
  - If you choose to submit the article to the review process, click the "Assign or Remove Reviewer" button. In the next window, follow the "Instructions" in the box in the lower half of the page. You must assign a minimum of three reviewers to the article. We suggest that you assign more than three, if practical, because (a) often a reviewer will be late with a review or never completes the task; and (b) generally, the more reviewers there are, the easier it is for the Guest Editors to make a good decision, and the better the quality of the published article. When a reviewer notifies you that they accept the invitation to review, you must return to the Editorial Board Center of Manuscript Central. Choose your article and then "View Details." Click "Assign or Remove Reviewer," and click on the "Agreed" button next to the reviewer's name. A standard email letter will pop up again. If this article is going to be part of a topic, you should insert a reminder to the reviewer that this article is part of a larger entity containing several articles on the same topic. The reviewer should take this into account in their review. You can add information on the topic at this point if you see fit. While reviewing manuscripts please be checking for plagiarism or double submissions.
- The reviewer reviews the article. You will be notified by email when the review is complete. To make a decision once a minimum of three reviews are completed, return to the Editorial Board Center of Manuscript Central. Click "Original Manuscripts: Manage Reviewers and Make Recommendations" in the left column, and then click "View Details" for the article you are working on. Scroll down to the second from the bottom block and click "View Review Form" for each Reviewer. To see any documents that the Reviewer may have added to their evaluation or to add your own documents, click the "Attach Files" button below the "View Review Form" button. Close. When you are ready to make a recommendation, go to the "Guest Editor Actions" block and select the "Make Recommendation" button. Scroll down to click "Post Recommendation" when you are ready to send your recommendation to the Editor-in-Chief. Fill out the form and enter your comments. When you are finished, click "Send to Editor-in-Chief." Click "Send Letter."

There are detailed instructions for this process in Manuscript Central. You can download a PDF of the instructions by clicking on the "Guest Editor Center Guide" title of the Guest Editor Center. Please contact IEEE Support (<http://ieee.custhelp.com>) if Manuscript Central is not functioning according to the Guide.

### Regarding acceptances and rejections:

- All articles must comply with the *Magazine's* guidelines for style and format (see below). Articles not in compliance risk being rejected.
- The purpose of 3 reviews for each submission is not only to decide on acceptance or rejection, but also to help authors improve their work. In particular, reviews should offer constructive advice for authors of rejected papers.
- A submission may be rejected promptly without review for certain reasons:
  - It is not technical in nature.
  - It is essentially an advertisement of a commercial product.
  - It has been previously published or has been submitted elsewhere at the same time.
  - It grossly violates the *Magazine's* guidelines, e.g., the paper is 7,000 words long or contains 20 equations.
  - It is outside the scope of the *Magazine* entirely.
  - It is clearly better suited as a journal or a conference paper, e.g., due to the amount of mathematical content included, or the brevity or narrow scope.
- If a submission is judged to be outside the scope of the FT but otherwise has merit, the EiC should be notified to redirect it to another part of the Magazine.
- It is helpful if authors of a paper that requires revision return a revised paper along with a list of changes made in response to specific reviewers' comments.. If the reviewers' requested changes are adequately made, the guest editor can then make a recommendation with either a limited number of reviewers or without a second round of reviews. Note that if the paper decision is Accept with Minor Revisions, the authors do not upload a revised paper, but are expected to make these revisions in the final manuscript they send to the publications staff (at pubsub [at] comsoc [dot] org).
- An FT schedule will often not allow acceptance of papers requiring major revisions because these papers need to go through a second round of reviews before acceptance. However, if these papers are revised and found to be acceptable eventually, they can be published later as standalone papers.

If a Liaison Editor has been assigned, the Guest Editors should inform the Liaison Editor about the accepted papers. The accepted papers and their reviews should be made accessible to the Liaison Editor.

After a paper is accepted for publication, the author will need to submit an entire publication package over and above what they submitted for this review process. The publication package will be sent to the ComSoc Production Staff. The Production Staff **does not** have access to Manuscript Central or to materials submitted there.

## ◆ GUEST EDITORIAL GUIDELINES

Guest Editors should prepare a Guest Editorial (800 words maximum) that mentions each paper in order of appearance and includes IEEE-style biographies for each Guest Editor (75 words maximum). The Guest Editorial should address the significance, impact, practical usefulness, and future directions of the topic. Perhaps most important, it should convey the Guest Editors' enthusiasm to the readers. An editorial which does little more than describe each feature article will not be acceptable.

Guest Editorials should be emailed in plain text to the publications office, along with color photographs of each Guest Editor. Digital photographs should be in .tif format with at least 300 dpi resolution.

## ◆ STYLE AND FORMAT GUIDELINES FOR PAPERS

- Articles should be tutorial in nature and written in a style comprehensible to readers outside the specialty of the article.
- Articles may be edited for clarity and grammatical accuracy, and will be copyedited according to the *Magazine's* style.
- Up to three mathematical equations are allowed if they are absolutely necessary and they are also thoroughly described; however, papers with equations should be rare
- References should be limited to 15. References to URLs and IETF drafts should be avoided due to their temporary nature.
- Paper length should not exceed 4,500 words.
- Figures and tables should be limited to a combined total of 6.
- Footnotes are strongly discouraged.
- Articles should avoid statements perceived as advertisements or endorsements of commercial products.
- References must be numbered sequentially, not alphabetically. The basic reference format is: [#] A. Brown, "Communications and modern man," IEEE Commun. Mag., vol. 1, no. 1, Jan. 1998, pp. 11-38.

## ◆ TIMELINE

- **Final manuscripts due:** The 1st of the month, 2 months prior to issue date. For example, all materials for an article in the June issue are due by April 1st. Please be aware that if this deadline is missed, then the FT will have to be re-scheduled for another later issue, which may be several months in the future.
- **Guest Editorials/Departments due:** The 15th of the month, 2 months prior to issue date. For example, all Guest Editorials and departments in the June issue are due by April 15th.
- **Page proofs sent to contact author:** 3 weeks prior to issue date.

- **Page proofs back to department:** 2 weeks prior to issue date.
- **Guest editors determine all other deadlines such that there is adequate time for thorough reviews and an opportunity for an author to make revisions.**

## ◆ SUBMISSION OF ACCEPTED MATERIALS

Please instruct authors to read the [Author Guidelines](#) page to determine what they need to send the Production Staff prior to the deadline.

## ◆ CONTACTS

Please view the [Production Staff List](#) for contact information.

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Source URL: <http://www.comsoc.org/commag/guest-editor-kit>